

Message Text

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11

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-10 DHA-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7931

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, LE

SUBJECT: CURRENT SITUATION ARMENIAN COMMUNITY BEIRUT MAY SHED
LIGHT ON PLIGHT OF OTHER BEIRUTI.

1. OVER THE HOLIDAYS I HAD SEVERAL OCCASIONS TO DISCUSS
WITH DR. YERVANT DJIDEJIAN SITUATION OF ARMENIAN COMMUNITY
BEIRUT. DJIDEJIAN, FORMER AUB SURGEON MARRIED TO AN
AMERICAN, CURRENTLY QUASI-RETIRED IS CHAIRMAN OF GULBEKIAN
FOUNDATION BOARD BEIRUT. RE TEACHERS OF SCHOOLS, MOST OF
WHICH ARE CLOSED, DJIDEJIAN SAID THEIR PLIGHT IN MANY
INSTANCES DRAMATIC, ESPECIALLY AMONG YOUNGER PERSONS,
I.E. LOW SALARY-LARGE FAMILIES. COMMUNITY HAS APPEALED
TO SCHOOLS' BENEFACTORS ABROAD, NOT ONLY TO MAINTAIN
SUBSIDIES BUT ALSO TO INCREASE THEM, THUS REPLACING
TUITION AND PERMITTING SUBSIDIES PAYMENTS TO TEACHERS AND
OTHER KEY PERSONNEL. RESPONSE FROM ARMENIANS, PARTICULARLY
IN THE U.S. AND IRAN HAS BEEN MOST GRATIFYING. IN
RESPONSE TO MY INQUIRY, DJIDEJIAN OBTAINED FOLLOWING
FIGURES FROM ARMENIAN AUTHORITIES RE LEBANESE ARMENIAN
FAMILIES IN BEIRUT AREAS CURRENTLY URGENTLY IN NEED
OF HELP. ARMENIAN GREGORIAN (ORTHODIX): 3,500 FAMILIES;
ARMENIAN CATHOLICS: 500 FAMILIES; AREMENIAN PROTESTANT;
200 FAMILIES. APPROXIMATELY 10,000 LEBANESE ARMENIANS
ARE UNEMPLOYED BUT MANY OF THESE ARE RECEIVING HELP

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FROM FORMER EMPLOYERS.

2. DURING THE FIGHTING SINCE APRIL 13, 1975, APPROXIMATELY 250 ARMENIANS WERE KILLED AND 400 WOUNDED. PRACTICALLY ALL OF THESE WERE NON-COMBATANTS.

3. MY OWN HUNCH IS THAT THE FOREGOING ESTIMATES ARE A BIT HIGH. NEVERTHELESS, ARMENIAN COMMUNITY HERE IS UNQUESTIONABLY THE BEST ORGANIZED. WHILE IT IS DANGEROUS TO EXTRAPOLATE, IT MIGHT BE NOTED THAT ARMENIAN COMMUNITY LEBANON, MOST OF WHICH IS CENTERED IN BEIRUT, NUMBERS APPROXIMATELY 220,000 PEOPLE. WITH ONE OUT OF 20 OUT OF WORK, AND ROUGHLY 4200 FAMILIES -- FOUR PER FAMILY -- 16,800 PEOPLE IN NEED OF HELP, THESE FIGURES ARE STAGGERING. I REITERATE, HOWEVER, I CONSIDER THEM SOMEWHAT PADDED BUT NEVERTHELESS ABOUT THE BEST CURRENTLY OBTAINABLE.
GODLEY

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